1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

538 professors, nobles, Setus, gypsies, Jews and
[522]
city people. Many tales explain the origin of rivers, lakes, hills, swamps, and forests and the creation of certain animals.

177 Folk religion. Of special interest is Estonian
771
folk religion. The geographical situation of Estonia has encouraged numerous borrowings in folk religion from Goth, German, Swede, Russian and Baltic neighbors. At present, more research is needed to differentiate between the original and borrowed elements. German influence appears to be the most overwhelming, and can be traced in almost any type of belief. These beliefs are used today more as literary and artistic subjects than as real superstitions or beliefs in everyday life.

771 The basic characteristics of Estonian folk

771 religion, rudiments of which have survived throughout the Christian era up to the present time, are animism and a close relationship
776 with the dead. Almost every object and power in nature has its protective spirits or fairies (haldjas), which are considered a later development under Gothic influence of the earlier native soul conception (soul of the forest, water, etc.). The best known of the fairies are the forest fairies (beautiful young girls) and the water spirit (usually a grey old man). Mermaids, distinctly of German origin, often occur in folk tales. Household spirits have probably developed from an earlier belief in the protective power of deceased ancestors and in some later developments they are simply ill-natured ghosts. Tales of wind fairies are popular also, but fire seemingly has been less important. At one time

Annex "A" Subparagraph 1k,

Sociological Background

RELIGION

771 795 The Votes are Greek Orthodox, just like the Russians and their close relatives, the Ingrians. Until the revolution of 1917, they stuck faithfully to their religious customs. But under the Bolshevist rule, only the older generation has continued the old religious practices, whereas the youth has become indifferent to the religion.

[186] The devotion to Greek Orthodoxy has brought the Votes nearer to the Russians and to the Ingrians, at the same time alienating them from the Finns, who are Lutherans. One indication of this may be seen in the fact that, at least during the czarist rule, the Votes normally did not marry Finns, but they would intermarry with the Russians and the Ingrians.

771 798 The Votes, although being ardent Orthodox, have, nevertheless not gotten completely rid of their ancient heathenism. We know very little of the Votes' ancient religion, and all we know refers to the worship of holy trees and springs. There were up to most recent times some trees or groves in Votic villages which were considered sacred. One such grove, surrounded by a high fence, was to be found in Baabina village. Although it was known by the name "Elijah's Birch," actually mainly aspens grew there. Each year on Elijah's Day the village people used to go to the grove to celebrate there a festival. The people remember that in older times an ox was sacrificed

796 in the grove. At the beginning of this century, however, they took there only bread and butter on a plate and candles for worshiping God. At the grove they set up tables and ate there. After eating they sat on the bench in a line and drank beer which was made by a farmer especially for all of them to drink. In a couple of hours, the people from other villages would join them in drinking. Alava, who has described this festival, compares it with the so-called vakkove-festival of the Ingrians.

778 In olden times the Votes also worshipped holy springs. One of them was called "Elijah's Spring." The water of this spring was clear and cool and it was considered to possess great power. At the spring there grew a high oak [796] tree which was also regarded as sacred. On Elijah's Day at midsummer the people used to organize a fair, called "Elijah's Fair," near this spring.

776 Elijah, who plays such an important role in Votes' ancient religion, seems to be their national saint. There are some other traces of the Elijah's cult preserved among the Votes. In Pummala, for instance, the bones of the ram, who was slaughtered for Elijah's Day, were taken to two crosses which were just beyond the village and were called "Elijah's Cross."

● 771 The above remarks refer to former times. What about the situation among the Votes nowadays? Prof. Ränk, who in 1942-43 studied the Votes, found the Greek Orthodoxy and the ancient paganism still existing side by side. It should be mentioned that at this time the Votes were occupied by the Germans who did not impede their religious practices, but rather encourag-
778 ed them. Therefore the icons, which were re-

771
789 Religion of the Krevins. On the religion of the Krevins, who died out in the middle of the nineteenth century in Latvia, we have very little information. According to Sjögren, they were very superstitious. On Epiphany they drew crosses on the doors, furniture, etc., and in former times they were said to have gone to church in sleighs furnished with signs of the cross.

527 The Vepsians have also several customs pertaining to the celebration of calendar festivals. On New Year's Day, for instance, they perform various magical actions. They dip splinters into a hole in the ice, light them, and predict, from the way the splinters burn, events of the coming year. They also take a pot of rich porridge into the kiln, bow to each corner, ask the spirits to come and eat the porridge and to help them during the harvesting period the next fall. In the evening they go to kulikoil, that is, to make fun in disguise in village houses. The jokers must be let in, even if the family is sleeping when they arrive, and they are shown respect which is almost mingled with fear.

771 Recent descriptions of the Vepsians show how strongly their everyday life is even today permeated with the darkest superstitions. When Kettunen in 1917-18 undertook to open their eyes, he had no success at all. Instead, some of them began even to consider him some kind of magician.

754 The Vepsians believe that sicknesses are not dependent upon the human organism but are caused by evil powers outside the body. They are convinced that only magic and witchcraft can cope with these evil forces. If someone falls sick after bathing, they go into the bath-house, taking bread, salt and other offerings there, and read a charm to the spirit of the bathhouse. If the sickness is caused by the forest, then they try to reconcile the forest spirit with sacrifices. Often they resort to the help of a witch, who is usually in every village.

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
Vepses

Annex "A," Subparagraph 1k,

Sociological Background

RELIGION

795 781 ● 771 The Vepsians are officially Greek Catholic. The influence of the Church has been, however, very superficial, limited mainly to the observance of formalities, such as the sign of the cross, bowing down to the floor, and so on. Under such conditions the old, heathen beliefs have had an excellent chance to survive among the Vepsians up to the present day. Sometimes certain features of the Christian religion have been mixed with superstitions. Thus a Vepsian family, for instance, was afraid of breaking the fasts for fear that this might cause the sickness of a cow or another animal.

776 The Vepsian heathen religion is based on a belief in spirits. The dwelling house and all other buildings have their protective spirits, called "masters" and "mistresses." Such are pert-izhand 'master of the hut,' lavan izhand 'master of the cow-shed' lavan emag 'mistress of the cow-shed,' külbetin izhand 'master of the bathhouse,' gomnan izhand 'master of the kiln,' and gomnan emag 'mistress of the kiln,' etc.; the two last-mentioned are called also rigibukoo and rigibab, respectively. Entering the bathhouse, the people bow toward each corner and ask a

Annex "A," Subparagraph 1k,
Sociological Background

RELIGION

795 The Livonians are mainly Lutherans. They were converted to Christianity 700 years ago by the German knights who used fire and sword to convince them. Lutheranism also was spread among them by the Germans. In later times other denominations have appeared along the Livonian coast. There are a few hundred converts to Greek Orthodoxy who yielded to the enticements of the Russians in the last century. The Baptist doctrine has also spread among them.

There are three Lutheran churches on the Livonian coast, in Ire, Piza and Kuolka. The Lutheran pastor, a Latvian, lives in Ire and preaches in all three churches. The only Orthodox church is to be found in Kuolka. The Baptists have two chapels in Iira and Pitrog and several preachers.

771 The Livonians have not been able to comprehend fully the Christian religion. They can understand only the religious fairy tales and the legends of the Bible, such as the horrors of Doomsday and burning in hellfire. Some of them interpret the Bible in a special way. Loorits tells of an old man who, because of the casual similarity between the names in the Bible and certain Estonian names,

771 assumed that Estonian was the first language of the world, and that Adam and Eva were Estonians. He was venerated by the women almost as a prophet. Characteristic of the religious fanaticism of the Livonians is the following event which took place in Pitrõg in the winter of 1920. A group of devout believers decided, after they had destroyed their mundane property, to travel to heaven. For this purpose they gathered in ardent prayer to a "holy" man to wait for the cloud which would take them from this shore of misery to better pastures. Although several dates were set for their travel to heaven, nothing came of it. Finally the people began to accuse their leader of being a devil instead of a holy man.

795 771 The influence of the Baptist sect is stronger among the Livonians than that of the established church. This sect is flourishing in several villages, such as Iira, Uushkila, Siikrõg, Pitrõg, etc. The Baptists have followed in practice the principle of self-improvement and brotherly love, and this may have influenced the high level of honesty still to be found among the Livonians. But the sect of the Baptists has also had its negative influence. The believers emphasize too much external formality and celebrate Sunday in the most extreme way.

771 In addition to the church religion, there exists among the Livonians a heathen religion also, which officially is condemned. This

771 religion is based on a belief in nature spirits, beliefs about the dead, and a belief in magic. These beliefs form the cornerstones of the [177] Livonian folk religion. As Loorits has shown, the Livonian folk religion has been exposed to very strong foreign influences (Kur, Latvian, German, etc.), whereas the genuine Proto Balto-Finnic inheritance in it is comparatively small.

776 For the Livonians nature appears animated, filled with all kinds of spirits. Almost every natural phenomenon has its mother. Thus there are mothers for snow, wind, earth, flax, forests, berries, the sea, etc. Fathers are, however, rare among the spirits (e.g. the forest father, sea father, etc.). Since the sea plays an especially prominent role in the Livonians' life, sea spirits are most numerous in the folk beliefs. Besides the sea mother and sea father, there are sea people, who live as the people on the earth do. The sea maidens bathe and dance in the waves and tend the blue seacows. There are also horses in the sea whose names are used to scare the children. The children of Pharaoh, the successors of the troops of the Pharaoh who perished in the Red Sea while chasing the Israelites, are supposed to be part human and part fish.

The Livonian spirits are completely anthropomorphic and their life is similar to the life of the people themselves. They have their houses, gardens and animals, their own

11: Scheffer O-4, 5 (ca. 1660) 1704
EP4 Lapps
Letts RB4
Estonians RG4

Livonia, retaining much of the Barbarity as well as Superſtitions of their Pagan Anceſtors: They have nothing of their own, but are meer Slaves to the Nobility, who give them certain Allotments of Lands to Cultivate, for the bare ſubſiſtence of their Families, the overplus being reſerved for their Lords, unto whom they are obliged to do certain Services at their Country Seats, in proportion of their Poſſeſſions they hold under them. It muſt be acknowledged that their Slavery is almoſt unſupportable; but the *Livonian* Nobility excuſe this hard Uſage with their Stubbornneſs, which is ſuch, that unleſs they be oppreſs'd beyond all Hopes or Thoughts of relief, they would ſoon turn out their Maſters, of which they have ſometimes given ſufficient Proof, when occaſion has preſented.

They are indeed *Lutherans* by Name, and there is ſcarce a Village but what has its own Church; but what with their Obſtinacy and Perſeverance in their Heathenish Superſtitions, and what with their careleſneſs and little regard of a future State, they have ſcarce any thing that bears the reſemblance of a Chriſtian, except it be Baptiſm; for as to hear Sermons, and to go to Communion, they are ſcarce ever ſeen at it, except it be by Compulſion, or for ſome Intereſt relating to the conveniencies of this Life. If they are asked the Reaſon, they alledge, that their Slavery and Drudgery is ſuch, that it is impoſſible for them to apply themſelves to Devotion. And to confeſs the Truth, this ſeems to be no framed Excuſe; for conſidering, that beſides the Daily Turmoils they undergo at Home for providing for their Families, they are obliged to do Services at the Seats of their Lords, whither they repair early in the Morning every *Monday*, and return not till late on *Saturday* Night; during which time they have ſcarce two Hours in 24 allow'd them for Sleep (if their Lords be good Natur'd, for the reſt give them ſcarce any intermiſſion) during which time they undergo ſuch incredible Fatigues and Drudgeries (both Men and Women) in cleaving of Wood, Cultivating the Ground, Thraſhing and Drying of Corn, that it is no Wonder, if they rather apply theſe few Hours on *Sundays* for Reſt than in Devotion. This inſupportable Slavery, their want of Reſt, and the Badneſs of their Diet, being nothing elſe but Rye Bread, dry

11: Scheffer O-4, 5 (ca. 1660) 1704
EP4 Lapps
Letts RB4
Estonians RG4

the Chappel, they offer a Sacrifice of Fruits and Fleſh, for the preſervation of themſelves and their Cattel, for the next Year. The whole is concluded with Feaſting, Drinking, and Quarrelling.

Their Marriage Ceremonies are much of the ſame ſtamp; for, if a Peaſant marries a Laſs out of another Village, he fetches her from thence on Horſeback, ſhe imbracing him with her right Arm. In his Hand he holds a Stick cleft at the upper end, where he puts a piece of Braſs Mony, which is given as a Reward to the Perſon who opens the Wicket, through which he paſſes. In their return, beſides a Bag-piper, Two of his neareſt Kinſmen ride before on Horſe-back, with drawn Swords in their Hands, wherewith they ſtrike twice croſſwiſe the Door, thro' which they are to enter the Houſe, where the Marriage is to be Conſummated; and as ſoon as the Bridegroom is ſeated, they fix one of theſe Swords in a Beam over his Head, to prevent Charms, as they ſay; to prevent which, the Bride alſo, as ſhe paſſes along the Road, ſcatters ſmall Pieces of Red Woollen Stuff, eſpecially near the Croſſes, where croſs-ways meet, and upon the Graves of Unbaptized Children, who are here Buried in the High-ways. The only thing moſt worth taking notice of among ſo barbarous a Race, is, That after the Bridegroom and Bride are ſet down at Table with the other Gueſts, they don't ſtay with them till the end of the Feaſt, for fear of overcharging themſelves with ſtrong Liquor, but within half an Hour after retire to the nuptial Bed, where after they have made the beſt Tryal of their mutual Strength for two Hours, they return to the reſt; and ſpend the remaining part of the Day and Night, with Eating, Drinking, and Dancing; till what with Drunkenneſs, and what with Wearineſs, they drop down upon the Floor, and ſo fall a ſleep together. If the Bride has been able to ſave a little by her Drudgery, ſhe wares upon this ſolemn Occaſion, a Necklace of thin Plates of Silver round the Neck, of the bigneſs of a Crown Piece, and one of the ſame Mettal hanging down on a Chain from the Neck upon her Breaſt, of the bigneſs of a ſmall Wooden Trenchar. For the reſt, their Garments are commonly of home-made courſe Woollen Cloth, the Womens Petti-Coats being like Sacks, without any Pleats.

Formerly the neglect theſe miſerable Wretches ſhew of their Salvation, was in a great meaſure attributed to the

11: Scheffer O-4,5 (ca. 1660) 1704
EP4 Lapps
Estonia 964
Letts RB4

the Ignorance and Careleſneſs of the Country Clergy; but ſince by the Care of the *Swediſh* Kings, a Yearly Synod has been Convocated at *Rival*, for the regulation of Church-Affairs, and Examination of the Clergy-Men; it has been found by experience, that beſides their unfitneſs for Devotion, by reaſon of the conſtant Fatigues they are forced to undergo, their antient Idolatry and Superſtition, has taken ſo deep root among them, as not to be quite extirpated by the Art of Man; for ſuch is their Inclination for Sorcery, that they are of Opinion their Cattel cannot thrive without it; for which reaſon, Fathers and Mothers among theſe Peaſants, are as careful to inſtruct their Children in it, as we do in the Cathechiſm and other good Morals. To elude the Effects of Charms, they never kill a Beaſt, or make a Slaughter, but they throw ſome part away, upon which the effect of the Charm is to fall; nay, they are ſo far entangled in Superſtition, that if within a few Weeks after Baptiſm, the Child happen to fall ill, or pine away, they Rebaptize it, alledging, that the firſt Name was not agreable to its Conſtitution, tho' very ſevere Laws have been enacted againſt it. The worſt of all is, that they are ſo Tenacious of theſe Superſtitions, and ſo obſtinate in the perſeverance of their antient Cuſtoms, that nothing is able to divert them from it. Of this there have been ſeveral Inſtances of late Years; for theſe Peaſants, as I told you before, being not permitted to purchaſe any Lands, but obliged to live upon the Allotments granted to them by their Lords, for the bare ſuſtenance of their Families, will ſometimes cut or burn down ſome Woods, and Manure the Ground, which produces good Wheat; this they hide for Sale; but if they happen to be catch'd, they are ſtrip'd to the middle, and ty'd to a Poſt, where they are ſoundly whipt with a Switch, till the Blood iſſues forth on all Sides; I ſay, there are many Inſtances of ſuch among the *Livonian* Peaſants, who rather than redeem this Chaſtiſement by a ſmall pecuniary Mulct of about 18 or 16 Pence, have choſen to ſubmit readily to the Puniſhment, alledging, that rather than introduce any Novelty of this Kind, they would ſuffer the ſame Chaſtiſement their Fore-fathers uſed to do before them.

CHAP.